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Mr Edwards
Deputy Headteacher
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Dear Mr Edwards

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: personal, social and health education (PSHE education)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 6 and 7 March 2012 to look at work in PSHE education.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of eight lessons, including three joint observations and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of PSHE education is good.

Achievement in PSHE education

Achievement in PSHE education is good.

- Students are well aware of the dangers associated with the misuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco and they are confident they can make informed choices for their own health and safety and for the safety of others. They have a good understanding of the importance of a balanced diet and the role that exercise plays in maintaining physical and mental health. Students are aware of stress and eating disorders and know they have adults who can support them. They are aware of peer-pressure and practise ways of resisting it. Students discuss risks associated with their health and develop strategies to overcome harm.
- Students' understanding of the physical and emotional aspects of sex and relationships education is good and they know how to ask for further

advice and where to find it; the school nurse is especially valued. Students say they have good relationships with their teachers, feel secure in school and that any questions they have are answered. They have respect for themselves and for others and are able to express their views maturely. Students have a good knowledge of some types of bullying although they are less aware of racist, sexist and homophobic bullying.

- A well-planned enterprise and finance programme is provided so all students have a good understanding of money management and how business and the economy work. Students are confident about their future because the careers programme provides opportunities to research different types of employment and education.
- Students are positive, confident, articulate and keen to share their views. They take on a range of responsibilities across the school including acting as ambassadors to support younger students.

Quality of teaching in PSHE education

The quality of teaching in PSHE education is good.

- Lessons are well planned with clear objectives; they are well resourced and include opportunities for discussion. In the best lessons, questioning is used well to encourage critical thinking and to provide evidence of deeper learning. However, there are sometimes insufficient opportunities for independent learning and research as teachers direct too many of the activities.
- Some teachers plan work that is not always well matched to varied abilities, especially for the more able; students often complete the same tasks despite their different starting points.
- Teachers plan additional learning skills days which are much enjoyed by students. On these days, they have opportunities to work in teams to complete specific tasks and engage in activities to use their enterprise and problem-solving skills. Tutor time is also used to reflect on recent learning and discuss topical issues.
- Assessment involves the end of key stage attainment statements and the use of end of unit tests for some topics. Students are increasingly involved in peer- and self-assessment. Formal teacher assessment and the recording of students' knowledge and understanding of discrete elements of PSHE education is developing.

Quality of the curriculum in PSHE education

The quality of the curriculum in PSHE education is good.

- Designated curriculum time is complemented by well-planned cross-curricular contributions, tutor time, learning skills days and assemblies. The subject is brought alive with exciting and lively activities that students are enthused by and provide memorable experiences and a sense of personal achievement.
- All aspects of statutory requirements for PSHE education are met.

- A comprehensive programme is planned for all year groups that includes units of health, enterprise, careers and social, emotional aspects of learning (SEAL). The emotional well-being of students is seen as essential to their eventual success. Additional provision of work-related foundation skills is provided to support students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PSHE education is good.

- The coordinators for health, careers, enterprise and PSHE education across the curriculum are enthusiastic and committed. They have mapped provision well and support teaching staff effectively. As a result, the subject has high status and a visible impact.
- Monitoring of provision is good and self-evaluation is generally accurate. However, leadership is yet to ensure that students are provided with sufficient opportunities for independent learning.
- School leaders have actively secured improvements in the pace of lessons and the use of peer- and self-assessment. Improvement planning is strong with a good range of achievable actions with a clear whole-school approach.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that students are aware of all types of bullying including racist, sexist and homophobic bullying
- providing sufficient opportunities for students' own independent learning and research
- ensuring that abilities and tasks are well matched, especially for the more able.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop PSHE in the school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Mary Lanovy-Taylor
Additional Inspector